

Sussex TB Clinic: Temporary Service Changes

DOVER – Due to construction, the Division of Public Health (DPH) Tuberculosis and Prevention Control Service at the Sussex County Health Unit, 544 South Bedford St., Georgetown, will be changing its service offerings for some patients from December 21, 2015 – January 24, 2016. During this period, patients needing to see a physician will be directed to Kent County Health Unit Tuberculosis Prevention and Control Clinic, 805 River Road, Dover. All other patients may be seen as normal at the Sussex County Health Unit. Anyone with questions about which location to visit or to learn if you qualify for transportation to the Kent County Unit doctor's office visit during construction, call 302-515-3177.

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The advanced planning and notification are intended to reduce any inconvenience to providers, employers, and clients. Once completed, the construction project will provide a more comfortable client waiting room and behind-the-scenes improvements for tuberculosis prevention and control services at the health unit.

Clients are encouraged to find their own transportation to the Kent County Health Unit on Wednesdays during the construction period but may qualify for free transportation. Due to travel time and transportation availability for Wednesday clinics in Dover, clients who opt to be transported by DPH staff should plan for their appointments to take a minimum of three (3) hours. Transportation will only be provided for the client and a translator, as necessary. Clients will not be permitted to bring additional persons or children for transport. If the client is a child, the parent or guardian must provide appropriate car seat safety equipment in order to use transportation provided by the health unit.

TB remains a serious public health concern in Delaware and throughout the country. Once the leading cause of death in the United States, aggressive diagnosis and treatment has significantly reduced the number of cases and fatalities. Aggressive treatment is vital to keeping the disease under control, particularly as antibiotic resistant strains of the disease have emerged. A disease caused by a bacterium called *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, TB usually attack the lungs, but can attack any part of the body such as the kidney, spine, and brain. If not treated properly, TB disease can be fatal.

There were 22 cases of active TB in Delaware in 2014. If TB bacteria become active in the body and multiply, the person will go from having latent TB infection to being sick with TB disease. For people whose immune systems are weak, especially those with HIV infection, the risk of developing TB disease is much higher than for people with normal immune systems. People with active TB can spread the disease by putting the bacteria in the air by coughing, sneezing, speaking, or singing. People nearby may breathe in these bacteria and become infected.

The DPH Sussex Clinic reports approximately 5,000 client visits a year for evaluation, the majority of whom have latent TB and are under treatment to prevent the development of active TB. An estimated 5 percent to 10 percent of latent cases become active without treatment.

For further information on the DPH Tuberculosis services, visit:

<http://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/dpc/tbervices.html>. For further information on TB, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/tb/>.

Delaware Health and Social Services is committed to improving the quality of the lives of Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations. DPH, a division of DHSS, urges Delawareans to make healthier choices with the 5-2-1 Almost None campaign: eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables each day, have no more than 2 hours of recreational screen time

each day (includes TV, computer, gaming), get 1 or more hours of physical activity each day, and drink almost no sugary beverages.